



Awakening consciences, educating the mind, forging souls

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Valeurs de l'Armée de Terre

Lebanon, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Central African Republic, Mali, Afghanistan, Former Yugoslavia, Somalia, Kosovo, Libya, Rwanda, Republic of the Congo, asymmetric wars, asymmetrical wars, asymmetry For more than 50 years, modern conflict has made the context of military commitments and the use of armed force ever more complex.

Since the total wars of the twentieth century, conflicts and relations between belligerents have not only changed in nature, but they also require leaders to fully understand the meaning of their actions, in a media and ethico-legal framework that is becoming increasingly complex. This is usually part of an overall political and military strategy, sometimes difficult to grasp for those who may find themselves brutally plunged into the heart of the ultra-violence in the theatre of operations.

Only sometimes, often in the midst of populations, leaders must then exercise their responsibilities and take their decisions in full awareness of their actions and without parasitic inhibitions due to the judicialisation and penalisation of recent conflicts.³ This is due to the omnipresence of the media, the demands for transparency on the part of the executive and legislative powers and the reservations often expressed by public opinion as to the legitimacy of the commitments.

In this context, the training of managers has, with professionalization, taken on a decisive role in the success of operations: discerning in complexity, deciding in uncertainty, acting in adversity.

As a matter of priority, managers, during their initial training, must obviously forge their stature as leaders, their leadership capacity, their tactical sense, their mastery of techniques, equipment and weapon systems. However, this training cannot be limited to the warlike specificities of the soldier's profession. It must also be rooted in the sciences of Law and Morality to underpin the Ethics of Leadership in Combat by building a

foundation of virtues, values and moral benchmarks that can nourish their thinking, guide their behaviour and guide their decisions.

Indeed, invested with the power to inflict death, the soldier must have strong ethical references and convictions in order to be able, when the time comes, often in the urgency and the din of battle, to decide whether to control his strength or to kill... by respecting the laws of law. The code of the soldier and his code of conduct, the code of the legionnaire if he wears the green beret, the regulations of general discipline, the green book on the exercise of the profession of arms in the army (if he belongs to this army), the blue book on the blue book on the exercise of command in the army, the rules on the use of force, the rules of behaviour, the rules on the use of weapons, the rules of engagement, the rules on the opening of fire... in a proportional and reversible manner....

The challenge for the trainers is therefore great because they have to act in two dimensions that may appear to be antagonistic.

First of all, to develop a warrior ethos and to appropriate the values of the soldier, those which magnify courage, virtue, heroism, esprit de corps, brotherhood of arms, discipline, spirit of sacrifice.

But, at the same time, to forge the soul and the conscience, that is to say, to make people adhere to ethical values that meet "universal standards": humanity, solicitude, respect for human dignity, temperance, a sense of justice, a sense of responsibility, a sense of judgement.

In order to discern, decide and take responsibility, every soldier must first form a solid and upright conscience.⁴ In the paroxysmal moment of the use of weapons, the leader, by virtue of his strength of character, is the one who must impose the ethical framework capable of legitimizing the action taken and its effects on the adversary and the population.

Constantly confronted with dilemmas or contradictions in action, or even cases of conscience under the pressure of events, the leader must be able to rely on his moral conscience to guide his thinking and decisions despite antagonistic thoughts: good and evil, freedom and coercion, violence and control of violence, respect for the adversary and the right to kill, cunning and honesty or morality or immorality, just or unjust, honour or dishonour, courage or cowardice, legitimate or illegitimate, discipline and disobedience.⁵ legal or illegal order⁶ Human rights, human dignity and crimes against humanity⁷, fear, emotion and revenge, respect for populations and collateral damage, defeat or destruction, brutality and torture, sanctity of mission and blunder

These internal debates of the leader and the soldier have always existed since ancient times and have nourished the thinking and reflection of philosophers, politicians and military leaders by gradually placing humanity and law at the point of balance between peace and war, violence and barbarity.⁸ But the theses are complex, sometimes opposed, so much so that they draw on the deep characteristics of man, on what he has good but also on what he can show of worse.

In the complexity and violence of war, instinct and thought clash as soon as fear, survival, revenge and hatred invade the minds. Therefore, prepared, educated and armed leaders are needed to dominate the antagonistic forces that may assail them and distort or pervert their moral sense and judgement at the crucial moment of decision-making.

Educating the mind and the spirit requires time, method and a deep and lasting personal investment in order to be ready and confident for the long-awaited and dreaded moment of the Baptism of Fire. This complex process also requires guidance, accompaniment and tutoring because the ethics and deontology of the soldier touch the heart and soul of the warrior in two essential dimensions: political values⁹ and ethical values¹⁰.

The Army, in this field, has always cultivated the transmission of virtues and values, thanks on the one hand to the teachings of its military history and on the other hand to the richness of its intellectual and cultural heritage. On this basis, from the very beginning of professionalization, leaders and experts who were aware of the stakes involved have taken up this sensitive issue of the ethics and legal environment of the use of force by placing the soldier in operations at the centre of their reby placing the soldier in operations at the centre of their reflection and by providing concrete legal, philosophical, moral and religious answers for those who refer to them, to the fundamental questions facing the soldier who is given the right to kill by law and order.¹¹

In a few years, a solid training continuum has developed in all the training schools and within the regiments themselves to build consciences, support convictions, elevate reflection, and set the benchmarks according to a pedagogical process that allows :

- to understand the global framework of military action and its legal, media, political or societal constraints, thanks to the contribution of law, political science, history, military culture and sociology;
- to know the legal, ethical and deontological corpus applying to armed conflicts;
- to reflect, with humility but lucidity, according to universal moral and philosophical criteria¹² to situations of commitment likely to lead to "contamination of the senses" and "moral disengagement" through impaired judgment and moral sense ¹³ ;
- to make available to schools¹⁴ courses, files and concrete tests for situational and behavioural evaluation of leaders (EVAL-Ethics process);
- to imagine and anticipate future situations, technical or technological developments, likely to shift the moral barriers of "ethics acceptable" (robotisation , drones, substitution of the machine for man, digital space, medicine, cognitive sciences, biology, "augmented" soldier, etc.)) ;
- organizing experience sharing to enrich individual and collective reflection by encouraging collaborative events.¹⁵ or by promoting publications on forward-looking or testimonial themes¹⁶ ;
- to give external credit and legitimacy to ethical research in the Army through the high expertise of the teachers and researchers at the Saint-Cyr COËTQUIDAN Schools Research Centre and the richness of its partnerships.¹⁷

Faced with the chaotic and hostile situations of current engagements, as well as the dehumanized modes of action of new adversaries, often fanatical and disregarding their populations, the risks of loss of reference points are omnipresent for units immersed in the unpredictability of confrontation zones.

For the young soldier, a citizen in tune with the codes of his generation and the social environment that has shaped his personality and scale of values, moral, individual and collective conscience, esprit de corps, ethics and the deontology of responsibility are neither innate nor intuitive.

Forged in the crucible of schools but also of regiments, these essential reference points are the fruit of a long and slow process of learning, maturation, reflection, acceptance, experiences, sharing, transmission, dialogue and listening. However, contemporary conflict and its constant evolution always carries the risk of disturbing the "compass " of the combatants, amplifying their emotions and even shaking their moral bearings.

In the face of these dangers, training in soldier ethics appears to be the ultimate bulwark against human weakness and excesses. Training in the ethics of decision-making, for its part, builds the necessary wall against cases of conscience and conflicts of duty of leaders.

Before knowing the roar of battle and before having lived through the ordeal of fire with courage, valour and humility, the young soldier and the young leader know that victory will be worth only in honour.¹⁸ and dignity.

3. Rwanda, former Yugoslavia, RCI.

4. Green Paper 2018 edition The exercise of the profession of arms in the army "The alliance of meaning and force".

5. Introduction in 2005 of the complex notion of "duty of disobedience" in the General Statute of Military Personnel.

6. Highlighted by the verdicts handed down by the International Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia

7. Including the issue of prosecution for complicity as highlighted by the ICTR for Rwanda in ARUSHA.

8. Plato, Aristotle, MACHIAVEL, KANT, NIETZSCHE, MONTESQUIEU, TOCQUEVILLE, ALAIN, HOBBS...

9. Citizenship, State, Republic, Democracy, Fatherland, Nation.

10. Friendship, Freedom, Justice, Human Dignity, Courage.

11. Creation within the Teaching and Research Department of the schools of Saint-Cyr COËTQUIDAN a law department and a research chair around an ethics and legal environment pole.

12. Courses on "ethics and deontology for officers" at the Saint-Cyr COËTQUIDAN schools .

13. General Benoît ROYAL: The ethics of the French soldier - ECONOMICA 2008 .

14. Common course on ethics in the profession of arms (Ethics of decision making).

15. Colloquiums, seminars, debates organised in particular under the aegis of the Ethics and Legal Environment Department of the Schools of Saint-Cyr COËTQUIDAN.

16. Pour une éthique du métier des armes - vaincre la violence (General Jean-René BACHELET, VUIBERT 2006); Toi ce futur officier (General Éric BONNEMAISON, ECONOMICA 2012); L'éthique du soldat français (General Benoît ROYAL, ECONOMICA); L'éthique des décideurs (Professor Henri HUDE).

17. SNCF, HEC, ESSEC, Thales, French Mutualist Bank, International Society for Military Ethics in Europe(EURO-ISM)

18. There is no victory for the one who has lost his soul, every leader remains invested with a command responsibility "for the good of the service, the execution of military regulations, the observance of laws and the success of France's arms" . May this document help to foster in all soldiers and Army chiefs the ability to think, in order to preserve our common humanity... General Jean Pierre BOSSER, Chief of Army Staff. The alliance of meaning and strength - the exercise of the profession of arms in the Army.

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